



News Release

For immediate release: December 23, 2013

(13-173)

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Hospital mergers/expansion rules amended to give the public a voice

OLYMPIA — Rules filed with the state code reviser today will improve access to information on services hospitals provide and give people a voice on proposed hospital affiliations.

The state Department of Health filed the rule revision after Gov. Jay Inslee directed the agency to assess rules about when a certificate of need review should be required with regard to changes in hospital control. The governor also asked the agency to consider ways to improve how information about medical facilities is made available to the public.

The certificate of need review process supports planned and orderly development of health care services and facilities. Certificate of need work includes developing new hospitals and expanding existing hospitals; the sale, purchase, or lease of all or part of a hospital; adding bed capacity in a nursing home; and more.

The rules filed today require a certificate of need application for any sale, purchase, or lease of a medical facility. That includes when a hospital enters into an arrangement that transfers control of the facility from one entity to another.

Before a transfer of ownership can take place, facilities must submit copies of policies on admission, non-discrimination, end-of-life care, and reproductive health care services to state health officials. All of that information will be posted on both the hospital and Department of Health websites for public access.

As hospitals look to join together, many people have asked for the opportunity to provide input into these mergers. Requiring the certificate of need process will allow the public to provide comments. The rule also makes important information about the facilities available to everyone.

New rules clarify requirements for hospital mergers, affiliations

December 23, 2013

Page 2

The new rules go into effect Jan. 23, 2014 – 31 days after filing with the code reviser. After that date, all hospitals have an additional 60 days to submit policies to the department.

The updated certificate of need process helps ensure transparency with health care facilities and those who use them, and helps people make informed decisions on where to get medical care.

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